UNITED
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Secretariat

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ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: Assistant Secretary-General for Conference Services

Subject: REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Addendum

PRICING OF UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS

Principles of pricing policy

1. It has long been held that there is a dual mandate in the sale of United Nations publications: to disseminate United Nations information and to maximize revenue through the sale of publications. Both of these goals can be achieved through management of the sale of publications sensitive to both cost and market factors. The General Assembly has expressly approved the principle that whenever it is desirable and possible, the sale of public informational material should be encouraged not only because the proceeds go to the Working Capital fund, but also because publications that are sold rather than freely distributed usually command greater respect and are more likely to be read and hence have a greater impact.

2. It is an accepted business practice in the publishing industry that the pricing of publications should not be based solely on printing costs. Additional costs, such as editing, design and marketing have to be accounted for in the price of a publication. Likewise, if dissemination and revenues are to be maximized, market factors also need to be included in the pricing procedure.

3. The revised pricing policy is based on printing costs, but also takes into account other costs (editing, design and marketing) as well as market and industry circumstances (transportation). This policy will also be reflective

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of the quality and content of the publications from the viewpoint of market appeal as gauged by the Sales Section, Publishing Division, Office of Conference Services.

Rules for the application of pricing policy

Rule 1

Responsibility for fixing prices for publications in accordance with the principles laid down above shall rest with the Sales Section, Publishing Division, Office of Conference Services.

Rule 2

The establishment of price for each publication is made by the Sales Section using its professional publishing judgement and taking into account the production and distribution costs to arrive at a unit cost per book.

After setting a unit cost for the production of the publication, prices will be assigned taking into account the following:

(a) Allowance for recouping the costs of production;

(b) The price of similar United Nations publications;

(c) The prices of similar industry publications;

(d) The price vagaries of the target market, both segmental and regional. The procedure allows for prices to vary for different markets, for example, differentiation in prices for commercial and academic markets or different regional prices. Therefore, prices are to be established for publications on an individual basis.

Special considerations are to be made for developing country markets, and in no case shall the price be set in excess of those charged by commercial firms for comparable publications.

Rule 3

Owing to the special nature of Official Records and volumes of the Treaty Series, these publications will not be affected by the revised pricing policy. Their pricing structure, however, will be examined annually at the time of the overall review of the sales programme by the Publications Board.

Rule 4

The annual report of the Sales Section to the Publications Board shall include the prices for United Nations publications issued in the previous year and details of substantial departures for particular publications.

4. The present instruction supersedes instruction ST/AI/189/Add.15 of 26 April 1973.